



## California Biodiversity Council

*To conserve and sustain California's natural heritage  
through collaboration among leaders and  
cooperation across all levels of government*

### Executive Committee

#### January 18, 2018 | Meeting Summary

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##### Action Items

- **VICKI C** to coordinate call for Ex Com federal agency representatives to discuss different payment options as alternatives to paying meeting registration fees; develop recommendations to present to the Ex Com/CBC Co-Chairs.
- **STEPHANIE H** to research travel times from different airports other than Ontario and Palm Springs.
- **DENNY** to lead the Mojave planning team to continue to review potential topics and activities; revise the draft agenda; and address logistical issues. **STEPHANIE H** to support planning efforts as needed.
- **EX COM MEMBERS** to contact Kamyar and Stephanie with suggestions for planning a future ecosystem services workshop (speakers, reports, etc.).

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##### Welcome and Goals for the Meeting

CBC Executive Committee (Ex Com) Co-Chair Kamyar Guivetchi of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) welcomed attendees and reviewed the objectives of the meeting:

- Evaluate the November 2017 CBC Fall Meeting and Field Trip
- Review the CBC budget and discuss CBC meeting registration fee funding mechanism
- Discuss potential topics/activities for the Spring 2018 Meeting and Field Trip in Mojave
- Discuss how CBC can support ecosystem services valuation and markets

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##### November 2017 CBC Meeting & Field Trip

Kamyar and Stephanie Horii, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) with Sacramento State University (CSUS), led a brief review of the Fall CBC meeting and field trip that occurred in the south San Francisco Bay Area region (San Benito and Santa Clara counties). Overall, attendees' feedback indicated the meeting successfully achieved the major objectives: share information, network, and experience conservation out in the field.

## Discussion

- Todd Ferrara, CA Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) shared CBC Co-Chair Secretary Laird's (CNRA) feedback:
  - Meeting was well-planned and stayed on time; attendees had several opportunities to network at field stops and in transit on the charter bus. (Several Ex Com members agreed with these statements.)
  - Secretary Laird suggested Day 2 was about an hour too long; attendees seemed tired by the end of the day (which is also a good sign that attendees were engaged throughout the day). Secretary Laird did not convey whether Day 2 was too long in terms of number of field tour stops or in terms of content. The planning team should consider attendees' energy capacity for the Mojave trip, especially given the extended transit times in the Mojave desert.
- Several Ex Com members expressed they substantially benefited from the presentations as well and learned a lot about different conservation efforts that were previously unknown to them.
- Ex Com members noted the short walking tour on Day 1 helped energize people. They supported the idea to include a short walking tour on Day 1 of the Mojave meeting.
- Ex Com members also discussed whether future CBC Meetings should always include field tours. Annually, CBC meetings could include one meeting that has a field tour and one meeting in Sacramento without a field tour. Ex Com members said this will depend on the CBC budget, CBC members and other interested parties' engagement, and planning teams' capacity.

## Review/Discussion: CBC Budget and Funding

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Kamyar and Stephanie then presented an update on the funding support for the CBC (*Refer to **Attachments A and B** for the CBC Budget overview and detailed budget breakdown, respectively*). CSUS established a trust fund account for the remaining funds (approximately \$34,000) from UC Davis Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), who previously provided CBC administrative support. The Ex Com approved CCP to utilize these funds to support general CBC activities until the contracts with CNRA and US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) were fully executed. CNRA and BLM will pay an equal share for CCP's services to support the CBC. The CSUS trust fund will serve as the "bank" for CBC meeting registration fees to fund the CBC Meetings/Field Tour expenses on a rolling basis.

Most of the historical balance in the CSUS trust fund has been depleted; from November 2017, CCP began invoicing CNRA/BLM for CBC support activities (*Note: BLM contract/purchase order fully executed on January 24, 2018. CCP will invoice BLM until CNRA and BLM have evenly shared the costs*). Currently, a combined (CNRA+BLM) total of approximately \$32.9 thousand remains for general CBC support.

The total cost to support the Fall 2017 CBC Meeting & Field Tour was \$11,342.47. Approximately \$9,920 from the registration fees were deposited (number may change slightly due to refunds in process); therefore the meeting expenses were approximately \$1,422 over budget.

The current CNRA contract will end in June 2018 (*Note: BLM contract/purchase order ends 9/30/2019*). Kamyar said they will need to develop amendments soon to extend the period of performance and add funds to the CNRA and BLM contracts.

Kamyar and Stephanie invited Ex Com input on:

- Whether the new funding structure (where CBC meeting expenses are paid through registration fees rather than annual membership dues) seems sustainable;
- How to set up the registration fee structure for the Mojave meeting & field tour (*Refer to **Attachment C** for possible fee structure scenarios*); and
- What the duration and funds added should be for the CNRA and BLM amendments.

#### Discussion

- **Learning from the Fall Meeting.** The group discussed how to modify the registration fee process based on the lessons learned from the Fall CBC meeting. They also briefly discussed how to decrease costs at the next meeting (e.g., modify AV and catering needs.)
- **Leadership support.** To increase attendance, several Ex Com members recommended getting more CBC members' leadership support to participate in CBC activities. Also, agency staff can more easily justify their activities to support the CBC when their agency's leadership demonstrates it values the CBC's efforts.
- **Challenges for federal agencies' participation.** Ex Com members from state agencies said they did not have many complications for them to register and participate at the Fall CBC meeting; however, federal agencies identified several current and potential hurdles.
  - Several federal agencies have new and more stringent travel restrictions (e.g., travel budget substantially reduced).
  - For US Fish and Wildlife Service (US FWS), a meeting with a registration fee is considered a "conference," which requires four months advanced notice to receive approval.
  - For Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), if the agency sent more than five representatives, it requires four months advanced notice to receive approval.
  - CBC meetings convened as "workshops" or "trainings" may have fewer participation/travel restrictions.
  - For NRCS, if the total cost for staff to participate in a training exceeds \$40,000, then the national office must approve first. This cost estimate includes staff's salaries.
  - While Ex Com members identified these challenges for federal representatives to travel and attend, they emphasized they have local staff in the Mojave ecoregion that can still support planning/hosting the meeting and field trip.
- **Different payment structure for federal agencies.** The group discussed different payment options for federal agencies as an alternative to meeting registration fees. Perhaps federal agencies could pay annual membership fees, and BLM could collect and manage those funds.

#### Next Steps

- **ACTION ITEM:** VICKI C to coordinate call for Ex Com federal agency representatives to discuss different payment options as alternatives to paying meeting registration fees; develop recommendations to present to the Ex Com/CBC Co-Chairs.

#### Discussion: Spring 2018 Meeting & Field Trip - Mojave Desert

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Denny Grossman and Mackenzie Wieser, Strategic Growth Council, presented a planning update and several potential topics and activities for the Spring 2018 CBC meeting in the Mojave Desert (*Refer to **Attachment D** for the Mojave planning handout*). The meeting design will flow similarly to the Fall

meeting field trip, where Day 1 includes a half-day plenary meeting, a short tour nearby, and dinner; Day 2 is a full-day field tour. The plenary will likely begin at or near the Campbell House in Twentynine Palms.

Potential Day 1 plenary topics include:

- **Regional Conservation Updates** – both from different ecoregions and to introduce the Mojave ecosystem, local partners, and conservation efforts.
- **Panel discussion on regional conservation and development in the Mojave ecoregion** – bringing a panel of diverse interests to discuss how to work together to achieve the common goal, a sustainable balance between conservation and development.
- **Mojave Regional Conservation Assessment (RCA) pilot project** – present an update and several of the products from the Integrated Regional Conservation and Development (IRCAD) Mojave RCA pilot project; discuss how partners can contribute and possible applications.

The planning team aims to minimize the number of field trip stops, especially due to the long transit times between sites. Local partners have identified several possible stops in and around Joshua Tree National Park, Mojave Trails National Monument, and Coachella Valley.

In addition to presenting local conservation efforts and understanding the ecosystem's fragility, other potential topics include:

- Climate change resiliency (e.g., habitat connectivity)
- Recreation interests (e.g., off-road vehicles)
- Urbanization threats
- Availability of private (including working lands) and public lands
- Tribal interests and influence

Distance (between sites, venues, airports, etc.) poses a major logistical challenge. Few flights go into Palm Springs airport (Southwest does not fly to Palm Springs); almost all flights include at least one layover stop. There is a limited number of rooms on hold at the nearest hotels; however here are several hotels in the Joshua Tree/Twentynine Palms area.

## Discussion

- **Conservation and Development Panel.**
  - Important to include privately owned working land owner interests.
  - Ensure the discussion explores lessons learned in the Mojave that can inform conservation efforts in other regions.
- **Potential field trip sites/venue locations and topics.** In addition to Joshua Tree National Park, Mojave Trails National Monument, and Coachella Valley, Ex Com suggested the following possible field sites/venues and topics:
  - Palm Springs area – renewable energy, development, infiltration basins, etc.
  - Mt San Jacinto Tramway
  - CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regional office in Desert Springs
  - Salton Sea
  - Pioneer Town

- High-Speed Rail (as part of the plenary, not field site)
- **Transportation Considerations.**
  - Encourage people to fly into the same airport and meet at a certain time; then provide bus transportation to the plenary site.
  - **ACTION ITEM: STEPHANIE H** to research travel times from different airports other than Ontario and Palm Springs.
- **Other logistical considerations**
  - Include a webinar component for the plenary session.

#### Next Steps

- The CBC program management team will brief the CBC Co-Chairs on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and receive input on the Mojave planning efforts.
- **ACTION ITEM: DENNY** to lead the Mojave planning team to continue to review potential topics and activities; revise the draft agenda; and address logistical issues. **STEPHANIE H** to support planning efforts as needed.

#### Discussion: Ecosystem Services

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Kamyar informed the Ex Com that several entities, including the IAT, have expressed high interest in the CBC's role to support ecosystem Services work. An ecosystem services workgroup recently presented their work and new white paper to the IAT – establishing markets for ecosystems services on working lands (*Refer to the **December 7 IAT Meeting Summary** and **Attachments***). Kamyar encouraged Ex Com members to share what their agencies have done related to ecosystems services.

#### Discussion

The Ex Com agreed with the importance to support integrating ecosystem services into planning/management decisions. The group discussed several options for how the CBC can help advance ecosystem services work, including a focused workshop and/or topic at the Spring 2018 meeting.

- **Raise just as topic during Mojave meeting presentations.** Due to the already-packed agenda line-up, several Ex Com members suggested against ecosystem services as a separate agenda item during the Mojave meeting/trip. Instead, ecosystem services will be mentioned during several presentations (e.g., IRCAD). Ex Com members emphasized that the CBC should help integrate the concept of ecosystem services by continuously raising the issue when applicable, then hold a focused meeting/workshop/webinar at a future date.
- **Opportunities to have a more focused discussion:**
  - Hold workshop at a Sacramento CBC meeting
  - Separate focused workshop
  - Include a webinar component – important to encourage diverse participation.

#### Next Steps

- **ACTION ITEM: EX COM MEMBERS** to contact Kamyar and Stephanie with suggestions for planning a future ecosystem services workshop (speakers, reports, etc.).
- IAT will develop ideas for an ecosystem services workshop, then present suggestions to the Ex Com.

## **Closing Comments and Next Steps**

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Next Ex Com meeting: **May 17, 2018** | 2:00 – 4:00 PM | 901 P Street, Sacramento in the 2nd floor Large Conference Room

## **List of Attendees**

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| 1. Ted Frink, DWR         | 9. Mackenzie Wieser, SGC                |
| 2. Denny Grossman, SGC    | 10. Vicki Campbell, BLM                 |
| 3. Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR  | 11. Todd Ferrara, CNRA (teleconference) |
| 4. Bruce Gwynne, DoC      | 12. Armand Gonzales (teleconference)    |
| 5. Stephanie Horii, CCP   | 13. Mike Hamilton (teleconference)      |
| 6. Junko Hoshi, CDFW      | 14. Tom Moore, NRCS (teleconference)    |
| 7. Larry Rabin, US FWS    | 15. Lara Rozzell (teleconference)       |
| 8. Sarah Schremmer, CARCD |   |

## **List of Attachments**

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- A - CBC Budget Status Summary
- B - CBC Budget Status Details (FY 17/18)
- C - Full Council Registration Fee – Possible Fee Schedule Scenarios (based on Fall 2017 expenses)
- D - CBC Spring 2018 Meeting & Field Trip – Mojave Planning Handout